THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) The value of gold jewellery exported from India during each of the last three years is given below:

| Years | (US $ Million) Value |
|---|---|
| 1994-95 | 421.20 |
| 1995-96 | 480.40 |
| 1996-97 | 511.80 |

(Source : DGCI&S)

(b) No, Sir. The exports of gold jewel lery during the period April-June'97 vis a-vis April-June'96 are as follows:

| | (US $ Million) |
|---|---|
| April-June'97 (Pro.) | 156.23 |
| April-June'96 | 146.97 |

(Source: GJEPC, Mumbai)

(c) Does not arise. Gold jewellery has been indentified by the Government of India as an Extreme Focus Product and is a thrust area of our exports. Accordingly, the Government has taken a number of steps to boost exports from this sector during 1997-98 which include: (i) in order to increase the supply of gold, RBI has been authorised to nominate more agen cies for the import and supply of precious metals. The criteria which is required to be fulfilled by the nominated agencies has also been finalised by the RBI; (ii) third party exports have been allowed in order to encourage small exporters; (iii) value addition norms have been further sim plified; and (iv) the period for the fulfil ment of export obligation has been suit ably increased.

**Service Charges for Import of Wheat by STC**

1435. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether STC has been charging about Rs. 75/- per tonne as service charges for importing wheat while the charge for importing urea by STC is only Rs. 17/- per tonne.

(b) if so, the terms and conditions fixed for import of -wheat by STC and the names of the countries from where wheat is being imported;

(c) whether STC has been given the sole right to import wheat; if not, whether other import agencies such as MMTC were also contacted to compare the charges for import; and

(d) details of guidelines fixed by the Administrative staff College, Hyderabad regarding overhead cost/charges levied by STC and follow up action thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STAT : OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) STC has been advised by the Government to arrange, import of wheat, for being handed over to FCI for PDS distribution. In the process, STC finalises import contracts, arranges Vessel fixtures, import financing, execution of the contracts and settlement of post-shipment and arrival matters with sellers, ships, surveyors, FCI, Insurers etc. The present imports of wheat have been entrusted to STC only,, which is being imported from Australia, Canada & Argentina.

(d) The Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad had recommended pay-ment of STC's overheads in proportion to sales plus interest on capital employed and in addition 0.5% of CIF value as service charge in respect of imports of edible oil and sugar by the Government. These recommendations were accepted by the Govt, and as such the payments of service charge accordingly. However, in regard to import of surgar during 1994-95, Ministry of Finance decided for payment of 1.20% of CIF value to STC as service charge, which was paid by FCI. The same rate of service charge as for sugar has been mutually agreed to between FCI and STC for wheat imports.